

Annual Report 2006-2007



Central District

Health Department

HALL • HAMILTON • MERRICK



"The Leader in Assuring a Healthy Community."



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Teresa Anderson
Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR DIRECTOR

We are excited to present to you the 2007 annual report for Central District Health Department, serving Hall, Hamilton and Merrick Counties. We see this report as our opportunity to share with you some highlights of the past year. Our programs and activities are designed to fulfill our mission through four interrelated functions: to educate, protect, assist, and collaborate. We educate our community regarding healthy lifestyle choices that contribute to good

health. As part of that education process, we notify the public of actual and potential health hazards. We protect the health of those we serve through regular inspections and testing that contribute to a safe and healthy environment. We assist community members in obtaining needed services. We collaborate with other community members in providing services that assure quality of life for our citizens. Thank you for taking time to read this report and to learn more of our public health functions.

Teresa Anderson

EDUCATE

Every day, we each make choices that affect our health and the health of our families. Choosing an apple instead of a candy bar, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, buckling a child in a safe car seat, deciding to quit tobacco use...these are all healthy choices we make based on knowing what is good for us.

Having good information is the key to choosing wisely. Our staff is committed to providing current and appropriate health information to individuals and groups within our district on a wide variety of health issues.

Here are a few examples of educational activities and programs we offer.



The ABC's (Access to Better Care) Program is a two year project funded in part through the Nebraska Health and Human Service Office of Minority Health. This program was piloted for three months among the Sudanese population and is currently being expanded to the Hispanic population. One goal of the program is to provide minority residents with useful information to assist them in making healthy lifestyle choices. A second goal is to provide

useful information to immigrant families so that they better understand the American healthcare system and how to access it appropriately. A third goal is to provide information on the benefits of health insurance which should increase the number of eligible workers who choose coverage. Education to the general minority community is provided using volunteer Peer Educators. These Peer Educators, who have completed a training session offered through CDHD, share health information within their social circles, churches and extended families and friends. Current best practice indicates that Peer Educator Programs can be very effective in teaching healthy lifestyle and influencing behavior change leading to better health. To date, sixteen Peer Educators have completed the training sessions and have begun sharing health information within the community.

Preparedness and Response

Preparing for the unknown is a daily task for public health officials. We take very seriously the possibility of natural or manmade disaster and the impact of these events on our community's health. When Mother Nature unleashes her fury in the form of tornados or ice storms for instance, short-term health-related problems related to medication shortages, power outages and scarce food and water supplies often result. In addition, the ever looming possibility of a pandemic related to Avian (Bird) Flu or perhaps some other virus emphasizes the need for individuals and families to prepare for survival without outside resources for weeks or even months. Planning ahead is the

key to minimizing problems associated with emergency situations. For this reason, we work closely with area businesses, schools, churches, and families to assist them in the development of preparedness plans designed to meet health needs resulting from a variety of emergencies.

This year, as a way to test our community's readiness to deal with disaster, we participated in two full-scale emergency exercises. One exercise was planned in partnership with Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS). It was conducted over a three day period and involved testing emergency communication methods among hospitals and emergency responders in a 23-

county region. A second exercise focused specifically on Hall County and tested our plans for mass vaccination. Over 500 "players" from emergency management, fire and rescue, law enforcement, school systems, and hospitals worked together to transport, communicate with, and vaccinate community members with actual flu shots. This exercise tested the ability of emergency response partners to work together efficiently and effectively as we vaccinated 350 Hall County residents in one hour. In-depth evaluation by partners following these exercises leads to action designed to improve our capacity to deal with a variety of public health emergencies.

FOOD SAFETY

On routine visits to the grocery store or at lunch in a restaurant, it is rare for consumers to think about whether or not the food purchased and eaten may be contaminated with illness-causing bacteria. We want to keep it that way. Through our food safety program we work to reduce the risk of food related illness. We ensure that safe food is offered to the public by licensed and inspected establishments. During regular inspections, our Registered Environmental Health Specialists work closely with owners and managers, providing education on safe food handling. If warranted, we make return inspections to assure critical food code violations are corrected.



PROTECT

We protect the health of our community through a variety of activities and programs designed to prevent or limit disease, as well as to reduce and eliminate the exposure to environmental hazards

Immunization

We offer children vaccinations at no cost through our Vaccine for Children (VFC) Program. In accordance with the Nebraska 2010 Goals and Objectives, we seek to have 90% of all children fully immunized against preventable childhood illnesses as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This past year, 95% of all one-year-old children and 85% of all children 24 months of age immunized at our clinics have received all shots recommended by the CDC. In the past year, we administered 4,642 immunization shots to 2,092 children. The number of children immunized at our CDHD clinics in Grand Island and Central City represent a 22% increase over last year. We urge parents and caregivers to seek immunizations through their family healthcare provider or through our clinic as a means of protecting children against complications of preventable childhood diseases. We continue to offer convenient VFC clinics to families as a means of increasing overall immunization rates.



Influenza

We place a high priority on reducing the number of people afflicted with seasonal flu (influenza) annually. The chief means of reducing flu activity is through annual flu vaccination. We offer convenient flu shot clinics at both our Grand Island and Central City Offices, as well as through our Flu Business Program. This year, we provided 2,560 flu shots to employees of 91 different businesses at their locations. Along with preventing influenza, flu shots have been shown to reduce the number of colds and viral infections from which many people suffer each winter. Seeking an annual flu shot is good health behavior.

Water Testing

Assuring drinking water that is free of contaminants is a core function of public health.

Qualified staff in the water laboratory at CDHD conducted tests on over 7,600 samples from public and private water sources this year. In reviewing test results it was determined that 18% of coliform bacteria levels and 20% of the nitrate levels from private sources exceeded safety standards set by forth by the Environmental Protection Agency. In cases where abnormal test results called for remedial action on the part of well owners, we provided appropriate education. As a means of continuing our ability to provide high accuracy and quality of test results, a new "state of the art" nitrate analyzer was purchased this year. Additionally, this year our lab was inspected and re-certified by



Water continued on page 4

the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services using criteria established by the Environmental Protection Agency

While public water supplies must meet requirements for water quality monitoring, no such requirements exist for private water supplies.

However, we recommend annual testing of private water supplies for coliform bacteria and nitrate levels to assure safe drinking water. To request water test kit or for additional information, contact our water lab personnel at waterlab@cdhd.ne.gov.



Clean indoor air



Exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful to health. We assure that the air in restaurants and businesses meets minimum requirements as spelled out in the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act. This act requires that businesses implement certain measures designed to minimize exposure to air that may be contaminated by smoke or other harmful particles. This year, we conducted over 240 inspections of businesses to check compliance, and to provide guidance and education to business owners. Because we know the negative effects of exposure to secondhand smoke, we continue to work with local and state government representatives to make our community smoke free in all public places.

Disease investigation and follow-up

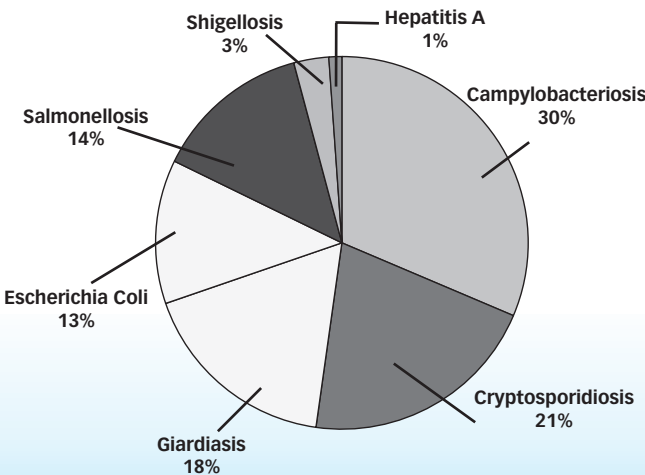
We investigate reportable diseases in our district.

Reportable diseases include those diseases that can have a large impact on the health of the community. Salmonella, E-coli, and campylobacter are among the most common foodborne illnesses. Of these, the most prevalent is Campylobacteriosis. This bacterium is normally found in the digestive tract of fowl, cattle, swine, rodents and even sometimes in puppies and kittens. Infection with this bacterium can occur



when someone eats food contaminated with the bacteria (most raw chicken contains campylobacter) or has direct contact with the excrement of these animals. We take every investigation seriously as each case may signal a problem with the food supply, in either manufacture or preparation. Most common food bacteria can be killed by cooking food to at least 165°.

Food-Borne Illness in 2007, By Specific Disease Cases



We also investigate sexually transmitted diseases, assuring that the infected individual has received treatment, and knows how to prevent further spread of the disease. We contact sexual partners of infected individuals to provide education, including information on how and where they can be tested.

Hepatitis C is an incurable disease of the liver, transmitted through contact with an infected person's blood.

The most common mode of transmission is through sharing syringes; however, Hepatitis C can also be transmitted by improperly sterilized tattoo equipment, sharing razors or toothbrushes with an

infected person, or having an infected person's blood splash in your eyes, mouth, or in an open sore. While it is possible to transmit Hepatitis C during sex, this occurs very rarely.

We investigated 46 cases of Hepatitis C in 2007.

ASSIST

A number of our public health programs are designed to assist individuals and families in obtaining needed services.

WIC

The WIC Program at CDHD provides health and nutrition information as well as supplemental food vouchers to qualifying individuals. The program's goal is to assure proper nutrition for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or who have recently had a baby, infants and children up to the age of 5.

WIC serves approximately 2,546 participants each month. Food vouchers averaging a total of just under \$130,000 per month are issued for use in local grocery stores. These food vouchers assist families with purchase of certain nutritious foods such as milk, eggs, cheese, cereal, fruit juice, and infant formula critical to healthy development of bodies and minds in our children.



Our WIC Program promotes breast feeding for optimal health of the newborn and the new mother. We know that ongoing support and encour-

agement for breastfeeding increases the success of breast feeding as measured by the number of moms who choose breast feeding over bottle, and the number of months they elect to breastfeed their babies. Peer Counselors are lay persons who are currently or have been WIC participants, and who are currently or have breastfed their babies. After completing

training, these Peer Counselors are connected to pregnant and new WIC mothers. Their role is to encourage and support new mothers who choose to breastfeed their newborns.



Public Health Nursing Program

Early and regular contact with a medical and dental office is key in maintaining good health. Through our contract with the Department of Health and Human Service, we offer the Public Health Nursing Program.



Medicaid-eligible individuals and families to health care, establishing that all important early and vital link between providers and patients. Nurses promote regular preventive care for Medicaid-eligible children. In turn, they also increase provider community participation in the Medicaid program in Hall, Hamilton, and Merrick Counties.



*Mission Statement:
The Central District Health Department (CDHD) strives to improve the health status of our community with comprehensive programs and policies to achieve a balanced relationship among the environment, human health and quality of life.*

Registered Nurses in this program connect

Dental Day

For the past two years, we have participated in University of Nebraska at Lincoln, College of Dentistry's Dental Day. On a cold winter's day in February, busses from across Nebraska transport hundreds of children in need of dental care to the College of Dentistry campus in Lincoln. The children who make the trip have been referred through the local public school systems, and have been screened for need by local volunteer



dentists. Once they arrive on campus, these children are treated to a day of fun and games. But more importantly, they receive much needed dental care at no cost to their families. While this program cannot meet the dental health needs of all children in our community, with the help of our community partners, we can make a difference.



Collaborate

Partnering to provide programs and services assures efficient and effective use of resources as we address the health needs of our community. By collaborating in planning with other agencies, organizations and groups, we can identify gaps in current

services and then work to fill those gaps. As we develop programming, we avoid duplication of similar services and direct our resources toward identified health needs of our community. Depending on the program and the issue, we sometimes

serve in the leadership role, sometimes as a team member, and sometimes as a resource to assist others in their programs. Whenever possible, we work with community partners to create and maintain a healthy community.

GIPS Welcome Center

This year, we housed the Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center. The Center serves as a screening/orientation site for minority students and their families new to our community. Having the Welcome Center on site provides new

residents with easy access to health services such as immunization, the PHN Program, and WIC. Additionally, our staff can provide immigrants with referrals to area resources important to successful integration into our community.



Safe Kids Tri-Cities of Nebraska Coalition

We actively participate in the Safe Kids Tri-Cities of Nebraska Coalition.

Once each month, we serve as a location and provide a certified technician to assist with a day-long child passenger safety seat check and installation. This year, we assisted with eleven day-long clinics where 334 car seats were checked. Of these, 320 (96%) were determined to be misused.

Parents and other family members received education and training regarding proper installation of child passenger safety seats.



UNMC “Wellness for Women” Study

We currently house project staff involved in the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s “Wellness for Women” study. Participants enrolled in this study learn in one of three ways about healthy behaviors related to eating and physical activity. The two-year study is designed to test which of the methods is most effective in reducing blood pressure in mid-life women.



DHHS Environmental Services

Nebraska Health and Human Services houses three employees in our Grand Island facility. The focus of these employees is environmental health. This close proximity provides for partnership opportunities between local and state public health entities to more effectively address issues related to maintaining a healthy environment.



Financial Report

Revenue by Source	Total	Percent
City of Grand Island	125,000	5%
Hall County	125000	5%
Merrick County	36,000	2%
State/Federal Grants	1,163,493	49%
Contracts/Other	523,091	22%
User Fees	400,217	17%
Total	2,372,801	100%

Expenditure by Category	Total	Percent
Personnel	1,393,756	59%
Operating	841,229	36%
Capital	108,755	5%
Total	2,343,740	100%

Grand Island Becomes Smoke Free

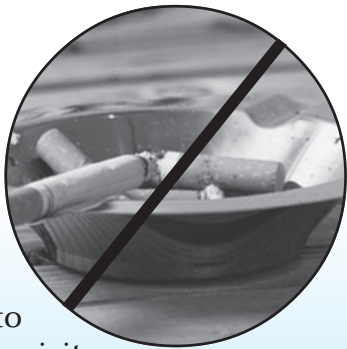
Effective June 1st of this year, Grand Island will become smoke free in public places and in all places of employment. As such, Grand Island joins a growing number of cities nationwide in taking proactive measures to assure a high quality of life for residents and visitors. The Grand Island ordinance has language similar to the new state law (LB 395) passed during the current legislative session, but it takes effect one full year sooner. While we know in general how the ordinance will be implemented, there are still details to be worked out prior to the effective date of June 1, 2008. In the next few months, we will be meeting with the Grand Island Police Department as well as with city officials to clearly define each of our roles and responsibilities in assuring a

smooth transition to smokefree status for our community. We see one of our main functions as providing accurate, consistent, and timely information and education to those who will be affected most by the ordinance.

Our environmental health inspectors currently work with business owners to meet requirements of the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act. We will expand these efforts to help business owners understand the new ordinance language as it applies to them. Our health department will serve as a resource for business owners and employers, advising them as they adapt current practices and facilities as required by the ordinance. Additionally, we will provide updated information to the general public to help

them develop a clear understanding of what the ordinance means to them as they visit businesses within our community. We will continue to offer information to those interested in quitting regarding smoking cessation programs in addition to the one we offer at CDHD.

The passage of this city ordinance is a milestone for public health. Creating a smokefree Grand Island does more to protect and promote the health of our community than any recent actions by our city council. It is with great enthusiasm that we look forward to the June 1st implementation date



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